Catalogue no. 89-625-XIE — No. 001
ISSN: 1914-3982
ISBN: 978-0-662-46092-3

Analytical Paper

General Social Survey, Cycle 20: Family Transitions Survey

Family Structure by Region

2006 (Revised)

by Marcel Béchard

Social and Aboriginal Statistics Division
7th Floor, Jean Talon Building, Ottawa, K1A 0T6

Telephone: 1-800-263-1136

Statistics Canada Statistique Canada

Canada

How to obtain more information

Specific inquiries about this product and related statistics or services should be directed to: Social and Aboriginal Statistics Division, Statistics Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0T6 (telephone: 613-951-5979).

For information on the wide range of data available from Statistics Canada, you can contact us by calling one of our toll-free numbers. You can also contact us by e-mail or by visiting our website at www.statcan.ca.

National inquiries line	1-800-263-1136
National telecommunications device for the hearing impaired	1-800-363-7629
Depository Services Program inquiries	1-800-700-1033
Fax line for Depository Services Program	1-800-889-9734
E-mail inquiries	infostats@statcan.ca
Website	www.statcan.ca

Information to access the product

This product, catalogue no. 89-625-XIE, is available for free in electronic format. To obtain a single issue, visit our website at www.statcan.ca and select Publications.

Standards of service to the public

Statistics Canada is committed to serving its clients in a prompt, reliable and courteous manner. To this end, the Agency has developed standards of service which its employees observe in serving its clients. To obtain a copy of these service standards, please contact Statistics Canada toll free at 1-800-263-1136. The service standards are also published on www.statcan.ca under About us > Providing services to Canadians.

2008-02746/

Statistics Canada
Social and Aboriginal Statistics Division

Family Structure by Region

2006 (Revised)

by Marcel Béchard

Published by authority of the Minister responsible for Statistics Canada

© Minister of Industry, 2007

All rights reserved. The content of this electronic publication may be reproduced, in whole or in part, and by any means, without further permission from Statistics Canada, subject to the following conditions: that it be done solely for the purposes of private study, research, criticism, review or newspaper summary, and/or for non-commercial purposes; and that Statistics Canada be fully acknowledged as follows: Source (or "Adapted from", if appropriate): Statistics Canada, year of publication, name of product, catalogue number, volume and issue numbers, reference period and page(s). Otherwise, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form, by any means—electronic, mechanical or photocopy—or for any purposes without prior written permission of Licensing Services, Client Services Division, Statistics Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1A 0T6.

August 2007

Catalogue no. 89-625-XIE
ISSN: 1914-3982
ISBN: 978-0-662-46092-3

Frequency: Occasional

Ottawa

Cette publication est aussi disponible en français (nº 89-625-XIF au catalogue).

Note of appreciation

Canada owes the success of its statistical system to a long-standing partnership between Statistics Canada, the citizens of Canada, its businesses, governments and other institutions. Accurate and timely statistical information could not be produced without their continued cooperation and goodwill.

Symbols

The following standard symbols are used in Statistics Canada publications:

.	not available for any reference period
..	not available for a specific reference period
...	not applicable
0	true zero or a value rounded to zero
0^s	value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded
^{p}	preliminary
^{r}	revised
x	suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*
^{E}	use with caution
F	too unreliable to be published

Note to Users

Please note this product was updated as of August 23, 2007.

The revised table updates the previous one published on June 13, 2007.

The numbers for the province of Ontario have been revised with final information available. Consequently totals for Canada have also been revised.

Table of contents

	Page
Introduction	6
Table	
1. Families by family structure, Canada and regions, 2001 and 2006	7
Methods	10
Data limitations	11
Glossary of terms	12

Introduction

This report presents a brief overview of the information collected in Cycle 20 of the General Social Survey (GSS).

The General Social Survey has two principal objectives: first to gather data on social trends in order to monitor changes in Canadian society over time, and second, to provide information on specific social issues of current or emerging interest.

The content of the 2006 GSS focused on family transitions. Surveys on families were also conducted in Cycle 5 in 1990, Cycle 10 in 1995 and Cycle 15 in 2001.

This survey monitors the changes in the structure of Canadian families. Topics covered include marital history, common-law unions, biological, adopted and stepchildren, fertility intentions, births and adoptions, child custody, financial agreements for child(ren) and ex-spouses/partners, work family balance and family functioning, work and education histories, as well as a wide range of basic characteristics including the domestic situation of the respondent at the time of the survey.

The target population included all people aged 15 and over, except full-time residents of institutions and residents of the Yukon, Nunavut and the Northwest Territories. Data was collected from June to October 2006. Over this period, a total of 23,608 people were successfully interviewed, yielding a response rate of 68%.

For further information on methods and data quality, see the section at the end of this report.

Questions or comments pertaining to this report should be addressed to:
Dissemination and Client Services,
Aboriginal and Social Statistics Division,
Statistics Canada, 7th Floor, Section C1, Jean Talon Building,
170 Tunney's Pasture Driveway,
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0T6
E-mail: sasd-dssea@statcan.ca:
Telephone: 613-951-5979
FAX: 613-951-4378

Table

Table 1
Families by family structure, Canada and regions, 2001 and 2006

	2001		2006	
	in thousands	percent	in thousands	percent
Family structure				
Canada				
Total families	**8,790**	**100.0**	**9,486**	**100.0**
Couples with no children	**3,333**	**37.9**	**3,752**	**39.6**
Married	2,720	30.9	3,044	32.1
Common-law	614	7.0	708	7.5
Couples with children	**4,271**	**48.6**	**4,358**	**45.9**
Intact families	3,769	42.9	3,855	40.6
Married	3,438	39.1	3,438	36.2
Common-law	331	3.8	417	4.4
Step families	502	5.7	503	5.3
Married	251	2.9	261	2.8
Common-law	252	2.9	243	2.6
Blended families	200	2.3	231	2.4
Her children	252	2.9	218	2.3
His children	50	0.6	54	0.6
Total married couples (with children)	3,689	42.0	3,698	39.0
Total common-law couples (with children)	583	6.6	660	7.0
Lone-parent families	**1,186**	**13.5**	**1,376**	**14.5**
Male parent	210	2.4	265	2.8
Female parent	976	11.1	1,111	11.7
Atlantic provinces				
Total families	**701**	**100.0**	**716**	**100.0**
Couples with no children	**282**	**40.2**	**308**	**43.0**
Married	239	34.2	254	35.5
Common-law	42	6.0	54	7.5
Couples with children	**326**	**46.5**	**300**	**41.9**
Intact families	287	40.9	267	37.3
Married	270	38.6	246	34.4
Common-law	17	2.4	21	2.9
Step families	39	5.6	33	4.6
Married	20	2.9	20	2.8
Common-law	19	2.7	14	2.0
Blended families	16	2.3	13	1.8
Her children	20	2.8	17	2.4
His children	4 [E]	0.5 [E]	3 [E]	0.4 [E]
Total married couples (with children)	291	41.4	266	37.2
Total common-law couples (with children)	36	5.1	34	4.7
Lone-parent families	**93**	**13.3**	**108**	**15.1**
Male parent	20	2.8	18	2.5
Female parent	74	10.5	90	12.6

Table 1
Families by family structure, Canada and regions, 2001 and 2006 (continued)

	2001		2006	
	in thousands	percent	in thousands	percent
Family structure				
Quebec				
Total families	**2,116**	**100.0**	**2,253**	**100.0**
Couples with no children	**807**	**38.1**	**942**	**41.8**
Married	551	26.1	660	29.3
Common-law	255	12.1	282	12.5
Couples with children	**1,000**	**47.3**	**983**	**43.6**
Intact families	876	41.4	844	37.5
Married	673	31.8	587	26.1
Common-law	203	9.6	257	11.4
Step families	124	5.9	140	6.2
Married	33	1.6	37	1.6
Common-law	91	4.3	103	4.6
Blended families	48	2.3	60	2.7
Her children	62	2.9	65	2.9
His children	14 [E]	0.7 [E]	15 [E]	0.7 [E]
Total married couples (with children)	706	33.4	623	27.7
Total common-law couples (with children)	294	13.9	360	16.0
Lone-parent families	**309**	**14.6**	**327**	**14.5**
Male parent	58	2.7	70	3.1
Female parent	252	11.9	257	11.4
Ontario				
Total families	**3,360**	**100.0**	**3,679**	**100.0**
Couples with no children	**1,219**	**36.3**	**1,325**	**36.0**
Married	1,061	31.6	1,134	30.8
Common-law	158	4.7	192	5.2
Couples with children	**1,703**	**50.7**	**1,809**	**49.2**
Intact families	1,525	45.4	1,624	44.1
Married	1,465	43.6	1,550	42.1
Common-law	59	1.8	74	2.0
Step families	178	5.3	185	5.0
Married	107	3.2	115	3.1
Common-law	72	2.1	70	1.9
Blended families	66	2.0	79	2.1
Her children	94	2.8	80	2.2
His children	18 [E]	0.5 [E]	25 [E]	0.7 [E]
Total married couples (with children)	1,572	46.8	1,665	45.3
Total common-law couples (with children)	131	3.9	144	3.9
Lone-parent families	**439**	**13.1**	**544**	**14.8**
Male parent	67	2.0	105	2.9
Female parent	372	11.1	440	12.0

Table 1
Families by family structure, Canada and regions, 2001 and 2006 (concluded)

	2001		2006	
	in thousands	percent	in thousands	percent
Family structure				
Prairie provinces				
Total families	**1,444**	**100.0**	**1,563**	**100.0**
Couples with no children	**560**	**38.8**	**649**	**41.5**
Married	476	33.0	551	35.3
Common-law	84	5.8	98	6.3
Couples with children	**686**	**47.5**	**700**	**44.8**
Intact families	595	41.2	616	39.4
Married	563	39.0	579	37.0
Common-law	33	2.3	37	2.4
Step families	91	6.3	84	5.4
Married	53	3.7	48	3.1
Common-law	38	2.6	35	2.2
Blended families	38	2.6	49	3.1
Her children	44	3.1	31	2.0
His children	9 [E]	0.6 [E]	F	F
Total married couples (with children)	616	42.6	628	40.2
Total common-law couples (with children)	71	4.9	72	4.6
Lone-parent families	**197**	**13.7**	**214**	**13.7**
Male parent	41	2.8	43	2.8
Female parent	157	10.9	171	10.9
British Columbia				
Total families	**1,169**	**100.0**	**1,275**	**100.0**
Couples with no children	**466**	**39.9**	**527**	**41.3**
Married	392	33.6	445	34.9
Common-law	74	6.3	82	6.4
Couples with children	**556**	**47.6**	**566**	**44.4**
Intact families	487	41.6	503	39.5
Married	467	40.0	475	37.3
Common-law	20 [E]	1.7 [E]	29	2.3
Step families	69	5.9	62	4.9
Married	38	3.2	41	3.2
Common-law	31	2.7	21 [E]	1.6 [E]
Blended families	32	2.7	30	2.4
Her children	32	2.7	25 [E]	2.0 [E]
His children	6 [E]	0.5 [E]	F	F
Total married couples (with children)	505	43.2	516	40.5
Total common-law couples (with children)	51	4.4	49	3.8
Lone-parent families	**147**	**12.6**	**183**	**14.4**
Male parent	25	2.1	30	2.4
Female parent	122	10.5	153	12.0

[E] use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2006.

Methods

The target population for the GSS was all persons 15 years of age and over residing in Canada, excluding:

1. Residents of the Yukon, Nunavut and Northwest Territories;
2. Full-time residents of institutions.

In the survey, all respondents were contacted and interviewed by land-line (non-cellular) telephone. Households without land-line telephones were therefore excluded. However persons living in such households represented less than 2% of the target population. Survey estimates have been adjusted (i.e., weighted) to account for persons without telephones.

Data for Cycle 20 of the GSS were collected from June to October 2006. The sample was evenly distributed over the 5 months and was selected using the Elimination of Non-Working Banks technique of Random Digit Dialing (RDD).

The response rate for Cycle 20 was 68%. This was based on the 23,608 respondents.

Even though the survey collects data on individuals who are aged 15 or over, it also collects certain data on members of the selected household. Characteristics of the respondent household have been retained to derive family counts in this publication. To estimate family distribution and structure, we used a household weight, which is determined by dividing the weight of the selected individual by the total number of individuals in the household who are aged 15 and over.

Data limitations

The figures which appear in this report are estimates based on data collected from a small fraction of the population (roughly one person in 1,125) and are subject to error. The error can be divided into two components: sampling error and non-sampling error.

Sampling error is the difference between an estimate derived from the sample and the one that would have been obtained from a census that used the same procedures to collect data from every person in the population. The size of the sampling error can be estimated from the survey results and an indication of the magnitude of this error is given for the estimates in this report. If the estimated sampling error is greater than 33% of the estimate, it is considered too unreliable to publish and the symbol 'F' is printed in table cells where this occurs. Although not considered too unreliable to publish, estimates with an estimated error between 16.6% and 33.3% of the related estimate should be "qualified" and used with caution. These are identified with an 'E'.

All other types of errors, such as coverage, response, processing, and non-response, are non-sampling errors. Many of these errors are difficult to identify and quantify.

Coverage errors arise when there are differences between the target population and the surveyed population. Households without telephones represent a part of the target population that was excluded from the surveyed population. To the extent that this excluded population differs from the rest of the target population, the estimates will be biased. Since these exclusions are small, one would expect the biases introduced to be small. However, since there are correlations between a number of questions asked on this survey and the groups excluded, the biases may be more significant than the small size of the groups would suggest.

To the extent that the non-responding households and persons differ from the rest of the sample, the estimates will be biased. Non-response could occur at several stages in this survey. There were two stages of information collection: at the household level and at the individual level. As such, some non-response occurred at the household level, some at the individual level. Non-response also occurs at the level of individual questions.

For most questions, the response rate was high, with non-response indicated in the data files. While refusal to answer specific questions was very low, accuracy of recall and ability to answer some questions completely can be expected to affect some of the results presented.

Glossary of terms

Family
The term "family" refers to a now-married or common-law couple with or without children of either or both spouses/partners, or a lone parent of any marital status with at least one child living in the same dwelling.

Intact family
Refers to a family in which all children in the household are the biological and/or adopted offspring of both members of the couple.

Step family
Refers to a family in which at least one of the children in the household is from a previous relationship of one of the parents. In a simple step family, the child(ren) of one of the spouse or partner lives in the household. A blended step family contains children of both spouses/partners from one or more previous unions or one or more children from the current union and one or more children from previous unions.